

A  
SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons,

*November 5. 1689.*

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By P. BIRCH, D. D.

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*In the Savoy:*

Printed by *Edward Jones*, for *William Nott* in the  
*Pall-Mall.* MDCLXXXIX.

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SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons

By R. B. R. C. W. D. D. D.

Printed by J. B. R. C. W. D. D. D.

Church of God's own founding; One  
**JOHN XVI.** that had cogni-  
 tion for many Ages: That  
*And these things will they do unto you, be-  
 cause they have not known the Father,  
 nor Me.*



**HIS** is the Reason our Lord  
 assigns of the Jewish Zeal  
 against his Followers, why  
 they put them out of their  
 Synagogues, and thought  
 whosoever killed them, did God Service:  
 And the Account so well agrees to their  
 Successors in the same bitterness of Spirit,  
 that it can be no Immodesty in us to  
 ascribe that Ignorance to a part, which  
 Christ himself charges, for the same  
 cause, upon the whole Visible Church  
 of God.

The Jews, at that time, had all the  
 Advantages of Possession; They had a  
 B Church

Church of God's own founding ; One that had continued in a constant and visible Succession for many Ages : That had no need of the Modern Arts, to found its Doctrines on the Credit of a Dream, or cast out Devils where Men were hired to be posselt ; but which had seen the Rod of *Moses* strike a Living Stream out of a Rock, and the Sea divided to give them passage and protection : One, which had the Oracles of God committed to it, and which truly sat in *Moses's* Chair. And therefore for these Rulers of God's chosen People, the *High Priest*, and all the State of the *Elders*, to be charg'd with Folly, to see their *Statutes* and *Ordinances* in danger to be set at naught, and themselves robbed of their Prerogative by a few illiterate Fisher-Men, were Provocations that seem'd to justify their Zeal, and make their Fury Religious. For to tell them, *They knew not God* ; was next  
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to affirming, *He had left himself without Witness*; And, *To reject their Authority*; was to *Resist the Ordinance of God*, who had said, *The Priests Lips shall preserve Knowledge, and the People shall seek it at their Mouths.*

But on the contrary, our great Prophet and Teacher, who *knew what was in Man*, and how little all these boasted Privileges, would avail in the sight of God, plainly charges these Unnatural Heats upon their Ignorance; They knew not that a God of Mercy and Compassion excuses no Wrath that is cruel and that fierce Anger was not made for Man: They understood not how great the Presumption was, to fancy his Cause needed the support of their Sin; That nothing which is Evil and Injurious, can be made fit for our Election; and that no Intention is good, which puts us upon the choice of Ill Means. And for this Reason, to the end his Disciples

should not be offended, nor prefer Authority to Truth, does our Saviour here affirm, *These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.*

The Words are plainer than any Comment would make them; and they are designed, in their First Intention, to arm the Holy Apostles against the Malice of their own Country-Men. They were the First Persecutors of Men, who believed in the same God with themselves: For what we read of *Socrates*, *Anaxagoras*, and others, being condemn'd by the Court of *Areopagus*, was not for Worshipping the Gods in a wrong manner, but for Contemning all. But in every Age we find the Jews Constant Promoters of the Heathen Cruelties: And if we may guess at the Reason of their Passion, by the first Spring of it, it does not seem to be a true Zeal for their Law, lest the Christians should  
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only change the Customs, which *Moses* delivered them, but rather an Indignation or Envy to be so much over-matched by their Glorious Works, and Excellent Abilities. *St. Luke* relates, *Act. 5.* That by *Verf. 12.*  
the Hands of the Apostles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People, then rose up the High Priest, and they that were *Verf. 17.*  
with him, and were filled with Indignation, and laid their Hands on the Apostles, and put them in the Common Prison. Afterwards when they could not silence these Witnesses of our Lords Resurrection, they *Verf. 33.*  
took Counsel to slay them, and so literally fulfilled the Prediction in the Text.

But this is written likewise for our learning who come after; for no Prophecy of the Scripture is of a private or proper Interpretation; it ought not to be confin'd to that single Occasion upon which it was first uttered, but is a standing Instruction for all the Succeeding Necessities  
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of the Church. And therefore we who now celebrate a Deliverance, wherein this Scripture is fulfilled in our Ears, who labour under the like unjust Sentence, as the Apostles once did, and still hear Murder called a Sacrifice unto God, may safely conclude, that the Admonition belongs to us of the Present Generation, no less than it did to them, who first received it; and though we have no great hopes it will convince Gain-sayers; yet it may serve to fortifie our selves, and to make us all sensible of Gods Mercy, in so long escaping that Fury, which first made Jewish Zealots and then Christian; which particularly inspired the Conspirators of this Day, and which we have reason to Fear, was not buried in their Graves, but will be always urging to the like Attempts.

For which Good Purposes, I shall endeavour some account,

I. Of

1. Of the Falseness of that Principle, upon which these Violences are generally built, namely, That they are Designs for God, and Hallowed by their being so.

2. Of those Mistakes which corrupt and misguide our Zeal to intemperate Degrees. And,

3. We may reflect on that wonderful Act of God's Providence, in so eminently protecting us, and the Gratitude we owe Him, who so does His *Marvelous Works*, that *they ought to be had in Remembrance*. And,

I. If we enquire what it was, which so far transported the Jews against the Holy Apostles, we shall find it none of the *weightier Matters of the Law, judgment or Mercy*, for these the Apostles observed better than themselves; but that which inflam'd their Zeal, was *Traditions of their own, the Commandments of Men, and not of God*. And of this our Saviour

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convinces them, *Matth. 15.* in an eminent instance ; They had a custom of Devoting their Goods by Vow ; this the Pharisees adjudged Obligatory, though a Father were in want, and so made the Vow take place of the Commandment ; now it is hardly imaginable , how they came to prefer this mad Practice to so plain and natural a Duty , but that our Lord insinuates the Reason, The Vow was of their own devising , and that made them so fond of it.

Here then we have a plain discovery, what makes our Zeal intemperate ; it is that which makes every Affection so, the being *Lovers of our selves*, and leaning to our own Understandings ; for this never fails of making us seek to impose upon other Men ; one effect of which always is, that we proportion not our displeasure to the weight of the things contended about, but to the opposition we meet with ;  
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and this easily leads us into a Fond Belief, that the Goodness of the Intention will sanctifie our Excesses. It was St. Paul's own case whilst he liv'd a Pharisee, he says, *Act. 26.* That he verily thought with himself he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth; and yet we never find this pleaded as a Justification of his Fact; but though he obtained Mercy because he did it ignorantly in Unbelief, yet he still confesses himself to have been a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and Injurious; and he afterwards pronounces, That whosoever does Evil, that Good may come, his Damnation is just.

The Reason of this Declaration we find to have been a Slandrous Report, that he held the contrary: And it seems to have been a Calumny upon our Saviour himself; for before his Exposition of the Decalogue, *Matth. 5.* he forewarns his Followers,

lowers, That they should not think he came to destroy the Law and the Prophets; and the following words shew the great Reason he had to do so; For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. This is spoken of the Moral Law, for the Ceremonial ceas'd at his coming, and the Judicial was of no force but in the Commonwealth of Israel; and the profession is of absolute Necessity to the receiving of the Gospel: For if that were not agreeable to the Common Principles of Good and Evil, implanted in us already, we could have no sufficient Motive to obey it; because the same God, who is the Author of our Faith, is also Author of our Reason; and gave us that to judge of our Faith by; so as for him to evanuate any Moral Command, is to contradict himself. To say there may be new Rules of Justice,

Justice, Temperance or Fidelity, is no better sense than that there may be a new Truth in a Necessary Proposition: For the Law written in our Hearts was at first given us to guide Mankind to the End of his Creation, and therefore must be as Immortal as our Nature: That which was restored by the Sanctions of Christianity, was this very Law, and as such, it was received by the World.

And it could not be received upon any other account: For the Learned part of the World was before instructed, that *True Religion and Undeiled* was ever the same, only Time, and the Necessities of Men, have varied it in the manner of expressing it. It was always true, That God is the most Excellent Being in Himself, and the greatest Benefactor to us; and therefore to love and serve him out of a prevailing sense of his Goodness, was always to be Religious; and *he that in*

*every Nation thus worked Righteousness, was accepted of him.* So likewise in the Duties relating to one another, the Reason of them never changes, though the Laws vary which are built upon it: We must, for instance, live in some Society or other, because one part cannot say to another, *I have no need of thee*; and therefore we are bound for our own good to all those Duties by which Societies are supported. We may all want our Neighbours Assistance, and therefore ought in good Reason to supply him in his turn: If we do not our Neighbours Justice in their Possessions, we cannot long expect to be safe in our own. And in all these cases, it is Equity and Right Reason which makes the Law Obligatory, though that determines the particular Act. The common Reason of Mankind obliges us not to invade one anothers Property, but it is the Municipal Law

Law of the Country which teaches us what it is to do so, by defining what shall be esteem'd Theft, Murder, or Adultery. When therefore we find Constitutions to vary, this is not an Alteration in the great Fundamental Principles of Reason, but it arises from the different Circumstances Men are under ; or at most, only proves that one Body of Men. is not so wise as another.

And for this cause, the old Christian Apologists, who best understood the Things they wrote about; did not begin their Method of Conversion where the Modern Controvertists do, by trying the strength of a Mans Faith, and gageing his Credulity by first propounding of a Mystery : But they represent the Doctrine of Christ as an higher and a more excellent Improvement of Morality than ever was before : They deny not that the same Virtues are found in the Heathen Moralists



lists which are in the Christian; but they affirm these are better taught, and encouraged by more certain Promises of an Eternal Reward. As for the Powers now claimed, to give away Heretical Kingdoms, to dispense with the Faith of Treaties, to commit Massacres in cold Blood, and the like Works of Darkness, these were never thought a part of Religion; and had they been so, this alone had been a sufficient Conviction that it was not from God. And therefore we need not wonder, that those Unbelievers, who border on Christians that teach such things, continue in their Infidelity: For so far as they believe these a part of Christianity, so far they are in the right not to own it; and there is no way to convince them, but by separating this Corruption from the Truth of the Gospel.

In a word, there must be some defect in every Action that thwarts the Original



nal Design of all Religion : And though we cannot always see the Deficiency of a Cause, yet we may be sure there is one, where-ever the product is bad ; and consequently whatsoever Passion hurries us on to Actions of Fraud or Injustice, it can be no part of the *Wisdom from above*, or an effect of saving Knowledge, but of the blindness of our Minds, as our Saviour declares in the Text.

II. It was next propounded to consider, How Men come to be misled into so gross and palpable an Error, and by what Steps and Degrees their Zeal becomes so intemperate. Now the Zeal we have either for or against any thing, does evidently depend upon the Judgment we make of it, and consequently it is perverted whenever it is ill placed; and must necessarily err when it hath not Knowledge for its Guide : So that to recount all the Errors that mislead our Affections

fections were an endless Task, because they are as numerous as the ways by which we come to be mistaken. In general, every inordinate desire is able to make our Zeal so, and at the same time persuades us we do well to be angry: Pride, Covetousness, or Ambition, or whatsoever rules the Man, and carries the main of our Actions after it, presently calls down *Fire from Heaven* to devour the Adversary, and proclaims Hostility against all that hinders our Enjoyment.

But there are two special Causes of these dreadful Effects, which seem to outmatch all the rest: The one is, the resigning up of our Passions to the disposal of other Men; and the other is a belief of secret Impulses, and immediate Inspirations. And,

I. The greatest Number of Zealots are never at the pains of a Rational assent,  
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by themselves examining the Motives of their Opinion, but they are moved purely from without, and so are the miserable Subjects of other Mens Excesses: They first deny Reason its Native Right, and then chuse their Faith without its guidance, till by having Mens Persons in admiration, they are brought into their power to be abused at pleasure. It is this giving possession of our Understandings that hath in all Ages made Divisions of so quick a growth: We all know there must be Heresies, and that they are no more strange in the State Ecclesiastical, than Mutinies in an Army, or Rebellions in a Kingdom: For none of all these Bodies consist only of good Members, and the bad will be always disturbing them. But this sort of Quarrels would be still the more harmless, if Men would but judge for themselves, and not be at the Mercy of every bold Seducer.

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None would be tempted by that restless Ambition of being Head of a Party, unless the World afforded Fools to follow him, and that he expected the Fiercest Maintainers amongst those who examined him least.

Perhaps this is one Reason why the hottest Disputes have begun about the most trivial Matters; because to deceive the hearts of the simple, there is always to be made a pretence of some peculiar Excellency; but that is not so easily form'd in the plain necessary Duties, as it is in Niceties of Opinion. And therefore we may observe the Controversies about the Commandments to have been all along the fewest: We never read of a Schism or a Persecution in behalf of Morality; for to force Men to do Justice, and remember Mercy, would sooner create Enemies than Admirers; and besides, there are few busie Spirits at leisure to  
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mind such common Attainments. But if any dare oppose what a Leading Man thinks fit he should believe ; if his Creed consists not of the same Number of Propositions, and he is bold enough not to be brought under Bondage to any, then he is presently voted a Malefactor, let it be in a great Matter or a small. Thus the whole Body of the Eastern and Western Churches fell out , and seperated about the time of keeping their *Easter* ; chiefly because *Victor* Bishop of *Rome* had less humility than his Predecessors, and found the Pre-eminence of his Church worth the contesting for ; The Eastern again fell out among themselves about the use of Images ; and to complete the folly, we of the Western are devouring one another, for things in the greatest part of which our Faith is not concerned.

This indeed hath not always been due to the Blindness, but to the Treachery of



Guides; they have always stole something or other in the Scuffle: And for this we need no other Arguments, than to observe the several Crusades and holy Wars that have been set on foot for Domestick Reasons. But there is one Injustice we still continue to the Memory of those Times, we admire them who were Learned in these Controversies, and managed them for their Profit, who had more Wit and less Honesty than themselves, whilst we forget to pay Reverence to those only wise and good Men, who scorn'd to be the Instruments, and so died peaceably, without Recording their Follies.

And if this Disease was so far advanced under the Primitive Integrity, how much have we to fear in these still more perilous Times? Never certainly was so strong a Delusion, as to believe the Infallibility of a single Person, and a present



sent Teacher against all the Principles of Reason, and Evidence of our Senses : No wonder the Obedience of such Votaries is blind, and that in the Arts of Revenge they come at length to be as Spiritual as their Leaders. For without this putting themselves into other Hands, one would think it impossible to find Men so hardened against all Compassion, as to attempt the Murdering of a Kingdom in its Representatives. It would be uncharitable to believe it, were not the Actors seiz'd in the attempt, their Materiels seen and exposed, and Confession made by themselves at their Deaths : The Apology also, *That they were a few Malecontents, who grew desperate upon Personal Provocations,* might seem plausible, but that no Injuries were then pleaded, and their own dying Words gave Testimony that it was Religion alone which encouraged them. And indeed it looks too much like

like the Action of a Party, because they have so often fallen into the like practises in other Countries, witness all that innocent Blood which hath been shed in our Neighbor-Nations, with almost as little warning as this would have been. But nothing better is to be expected where the Scriptures are denied, and the People hear of no other Morals but what these Guides will teach them.

II. There seems little need of External Encouragements, so long as that terrible Motive continues in the World, the belief of immediate Inspirations, and that Men are extraordinary Instruments of God's Judgments by a secret Impulse; for this is easily taken up, and only wants Confidence to manage it. The Pretenders to this, first form'd themselves into a Sect amongst the Jews, and they gave so dreadful an Example of an enraged Zeal, that one would think it a sufficient warn-

warning to all after-Ages to beware of its Transports: The Historian tells us of these Zealots, that under pretence of imitating Men of Heroical Impulses, they committed all kinds of Rapine and Murder upon their own People, that by their mad defence of the Temple they destroyed it, and that their intestine Quarrels more contributed to the enslaving of their Country, than all the Arms of its Enemies.

This perhaps may be called an extraordinary Case, and a part of that Vengeance which the Jews drew upon them and their Children by their Crucifying the *Lord of Glory*: But the Christian Story likewise informs us of the like Calls from Heaven, there we meet with impulses to Murder, Sacrilege and Adultery, and with Men of that reprobate Sense, as to Glory in their Shame. It was not only *Montanus*, who had his *Paraclete*, but all the greatest Corrupters of Christianity have.

have also pretended to Divine Inspirations; most of the Romish Errors have grown into a part of their Faith, by the like Artifices; they could not always argue Men out of their Money and Sense together, but they could fright them into the Snare, and find out Men who had Forehead enough to tell who they saw in Purgatory, and what Communion they had with Saints and Angels. It were happy also, if the Emissaries of that Church had never sown the like Enthusiasms in ours, and that they found not their account in putting those out of the reach of Conviction, who are deluded by them. As for us, who suffer by these pretended Gifts of Gods Spirit, we should beware of the other Extream, the denial of his saving Graces, and guard our Faith against such Delusions, as tend to render that tremendous Article of Gods Grace, a Subject of unprofitable Talk.

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III. Having thus attempted to show the Falseness of that Principle, upon which the Enemies of the Truth have persecuted its Professors, with the chief Mistakes which lead Men into it; it remains in the last place, to apply this to the Circumstances we are under, and make that sober use of the Admonition for which it was intended. The Context informs us, that our Lord spake these things, to the end his Disciples might not be offended and fall, but when the time either of Tryal or Deliverance came, remember he had told them of it: This likewise is the end of all these Publick Commemorations, that we may keep the great Goodness of GOD in remembrance, and mention it with Honour, and a Distinguishing Observation. And,

I. We are not to let these remarkable Events pass over our Heads with-

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out Observation, but to regard the Works of the Lord, and the Operation of his Hands. His ways are sought out of all those who have Pleasure therein, whilst the Wicked will not seek after God, nor is God in all his Thoughts.

There is an Art of God no less in Governing the World, than in Creating it; and to meditate upon it with a due Reverence, was anciently esteem'd a Mark of Piety, and the principal part of their Worship. But in what Rank soever we now place the Duty, it certainly puts the truest and best Difference between Man, and the Beasts that perish: Their Senses are as quick as ours, and for ought we know, they argue as right as our selves, so far as concerns the Action of their Life; but it is Man alone who is enabled to look up to the First Cause of all, and by the visible Things of Creation and Providence, to find



find out the great Creator. This also is the most Valuable Distinction between one Man and another: One grows wise enough by Experience to chuse the Good, and refuse the Evil; the Other seeth many Things, and observeth not: One hath his Senses exercised, and grows up to a perfect Man; the Other hath no depth of Consideration for any thing to take root in, and so never brings any Fruit to perfection.

It is indeed far above the best of our Capacities to see the Reason of all Divine Proceedings: *His Way*, says David, *is in the Sea, his Paths in the great Waters, and his Footsteps are not known*: Many Occurrences, big with Wonder, and rare Accidents, do, like the troubled Water, close up again, and their way is not seen. But this is one of the Difficulties which was intended to quicken our Diligence; We are not discour-

raged from the Labours of the Field, because we know not how the Plants encrease, and how their Seeds come to open into so curious a variety of shape and colour. No Man refuses to eat, because he knows not how his Meat is assimilated: And we cease not to boast our Knowledge, though we cannot explain the common Works of Nature, how the Moon knows her certain Seasons, and the Sea its Tides. And therefore we who believe it, may, without any presumption, go on to study that Providence which is too wonderful for us: And that we may not judge amiss, give me leave to mention only these two obvious Rules.

The first is, to weigh the Judgments of God by their End and Design; and the next, to consider their dependency upon one another, and how each particular concurs to make up the Beauty of the

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the whole. For, although we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, yet we are certain, where an infinite Wisdom is concerned, there can be no room for chance, and that where this directs, those things are beautifull in their Season, which alone looks like Deformity. They seem'd very odd Means of his Advancement, to have *Joseph* first hated of his Brethren, then sold into a strange Country, and there unjustly cast into Prison; and yet, without every one of those Misfortunes, he had never been brought into *Pharaoh's* Presence, and saved his Fathers House. It is to such bold Transgressions as were this Day attempted, that we owe the Laws which preserve us; and it was to the Violence of those who would have Rooted out at once our Liberties and Religion, that we owe the Present Establishment of both; had the Enemies of  
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our Holy Professions been contented to lead us Blindfold into the midst of *Samaritan*, a great part of us had never opened our Eyes, and seen the Danger; but every Advance of theirs, help'd on our Deliverance, and increas'd the Triumphs of this Happy Day.

If then we have seen the Hand of God in protecting his People, and that never any put his Trust in the Lord, but he did deliver him; if we have seen him puzzle the Wisdom of the Wise, and overturn them in the midst of their Strength: These are Experiences that deserve our Regards, and that should give us a strong Confidence in GOD, who hath done so great Things for us.

2. Last of all, We are to act conformably to those Sentiments which a due Estimation of those Benefits inspires us with, and so to make what Retribution

tion we are able. VVe indeed cannot properly be said to Recompence the Almighty, because we have nothing but what we have received from him: But he is pleased to declare, That *He who offereth Him praise, honours Him*; and therefore we are bound to pay these Praises due, in some proportion, to the Mercies we enjoy.

There is a natural Equity, that where the benefit is Publick, the acknowledgement should be so too; and therefore, since the Blessings we now Commemorate, were extended to the good of Society, and make Kingdoms Happy, we are bound to Praise God with the Multitude; and to enter only into our Closets, would be interpretatively to Contemn him before the Congregation. Man was not made a Sociable Creature for every thing else, but the Acts of his Religion, and all Nations have ever  
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made their VVorship as Solemn as they could, although they differed in the Objects of it; if we respect that which God ordained, the Religion of the Jews was perfectly National, and the Unity of the Christian Church, as well consists in one Visible Communion, as it does in one Common Faith; for else there could be no Schism without Apostacy.

If therefore we are oblig'd to a Publick Homage in the ordinary Acts of our VVorship; much more when we come to honour GOD not only as our Common Parent, but as the Father of our Country; as He that hath divided us from the Nations round about, as well in Happiness as in Scituation; who hath not given us over to the VVill of our Enemies, but hath still confounded their Devices, and kept the Simple by their Right; whose Hand is not yet shortened, that it cannot save; but who can  
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make our Happiness as the strong Mountains, that all the Storms of Envy and Malice shall break against it.

Above all, To the Praises of our Lips, we should add the Obedience of our Lives; and so raise our selves up into his Protection, who is the hope of all the Ends of the Earth. VVe are not thus wonderfully delivered out of our Distress, to add Sin to Sin, and to make God's Benefits the Instruments of his Dishonour: It is not to practise those Crimes our Selves, which we condemn'd in others, but to be a People Zealous of Good Works, and to bring forth Fruit unto God. There is so general a Corruption of Manners, and our Discipline is so far lost, that it's a Task worthy the Wisdom of this August Assembly to find out the Means of its Restauration, and to keep up the Bank against that Flood of Wickedness which is visibly

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breaking in upon us. In particular, I hope there is that Generous *English* Spirit left among us, that will not suffer our Common Mother to be torn and vilified, till we come to a Contempt of all things Sacred: If we once lose the Encouragements of our Learning, and the Distinction of our Orders: If that Noble Provision which is made for our Education, be once neglected, and those Schools of the Prophets be turned into little Seminaries, where Men forget that Modesty is a Virtue, and learn to talk without thinking, we shall in a few Years sadly find, that *Rome* will have none left to Oppose her.

This is not spoken to the reproach of any, but out of a deep sense of our Folly, and an ardent desire that we may not turn our Blessings into a Curse. If therefore we would complete these Blessings, and transmit them down to a late Poster-

Posterity, the VVay is open, and the Means is certain : Let but our Vices diminish, and so will our Dangers ; God will still be our Mighty Saviour and Deliverer, and so lead us through Things Temporal, that we finally lose not the Things Eternal.

*Now to God, &c.*

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Doctor *BIRCH*'s

# SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons,

Novemb. 5. 1689.

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Mercurii 6 Die Nov. 1689.

RESOLVED,

**T**HAT the Thanks of this House be  
given to Doctor Birch, for the Ser-  
mon Preached before them Yesterday at  
St. Margarets VVestminster; And that  
he be desired to Print the same; And that  
Sir Thomas Clarges do acquaint him there-  
with.

PAUL JODRELL,

Cl. Dom. Com.

A  
SERMON

Preached before the Honourable  
House of Commons,  
*November 5. 1689.*

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By *P. BIRCH*, D. D.

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*In the Savoy:*

Printed by *Edward Jones*, for *William Nott* in the  
*Pall-Mall.* MDCLXXXIX.



JOHN XVI. 3.

*And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.*

**T**HIS is the Reason our Lord assigns of the Jewish Zeal against his Followers, why they put them out of their Synagogues, and thought whosoever killed them, did God Service: And the Account so well agrees to their Successors in the same bitterness of Spirit, that it can be no Immodesty in us to ascribe that Ignorance to a part, which Christ himself charges, for the same cause, upon the whole Visible Church of God.

The Jews, at that time, had all the Advantages of Possession ; They had a Church

Church of God's own founding ; One that had continued in a constant and visible Succession for many Ages : That had no need of the Modern Arts, to found its Doctrines on the Credit of a Dream, or cast out Devils where Men were hired to be possesst ; but which had seen the Rod of *Moses* strike a Living Stream out of a Rock , and the Sea divided to give them passage and protection : One, which had the Oracles of God committed to it, and which truly sat in *Moses's* Chair. And therefore for these Rulers of God's chosen People, the *High Priest*, and all the State of the *Elders*, to be charg'd with Folly, to see their *Statutes* and *Ordinances* in danger to be set at naught, and themselves robbed of their Prerogative by a few illiterate Fisher-Men, were Provocations that seem'd to justify their Zeal, and make their Fury Religious. For to tell them, *They knew not God* ; was next



to affirming, *He had left himself without Witness : And, To reject their Authority ;* was to *Resist the Ordinance of God,* who had said, *The Priests Lips shall preserve Knowledge, and the People shall seek it at their Mouths.*

But on the contrary, our great Prophet and Teacher, who *knew what was in Man,* and how little all these boasted Privileges would avail in the sight of God, plainly charges these Unnatural Heats upon their Ignorance ; They knew not that a God of Mercy and Compassion excuses no Wrath that is cruel, and that fierce Anger was not made for Man : They understood not how great the Presumption was, to fancy his Cause needed the support of their Sin ; That nothing which is Evil and Injurious, can be made fit for our Election ; and that no Intention is good, which puts us upon the choice of Ill Means. And for this Reason, to the end his Disciples

should not be offended, nor prefer Authority to Truth, does our Saviour here affirm, *These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.*

The Words are plainer than any Comment would make them; and they are designed, in their First Intention, to arm the Holy Apostles against the Malice of their own Country-Men. They were the First Persecutors of Men, who believed in the same God with themselves: For what we read of *Socrates*, *Anaxagoras*, and others, being condemn'd by the Court of *Areopagus*, was not for Worshipping the Gods in a wrong manner, but for Contemning all. But in every Age we find the Jews Constant Promoters of the Heathen Cruelties: And if we may guess at the Reason of their Passion, by the first Spring of it, it does not seem to be a true Zeal for their Law, lest the Christians should  
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only change the Customs which *Moses* delivered them, but rather an Indignation or Envy to be so much over-matched by their Glorious Works, and Excellent Abilities. *St. Luke* relates, *Act. 5.* That by *Verf.*  
*the Hands of the Apostles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People, then rose up the High Priest, and they that were* *Verf.*  
*with him, and were filled with Indignation, and laid their Hands on the Apostles, and put them in the Common Prison.* Afterwards when they could not silence these Witnesses of our Lords Resurrection, they *Verf.*  
*took Counsel to slay them, and so literally fulfilled the Prædiction in the Text.*

But this is written likewise for our learning who come after ; for no Prophecy of the Scripture is of a private or proper Interpretation ; it ought not to be confin'd to that single Occasion upon which it was first uttered, but is a standing Instruction for all the Succeeding Necessities  
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of the Church. And therefore we who now celebrate a Deliverance, wherein this Scripture is fulfilled in our Ears, who labour under the like unjust Sentence, as the Apostles once did, and still hear Murder called a Sacrifice unto God, may safely conclude, that the Admonition belongs to us of the Present Generation, no less than it did to them, who first received it; and though we have no great hopes it will convince Gain-sayers, yet it may serve to fortifie our selves, and to make us all sensible of Gods Mercy, in so long escaping that Fury, which first made Jewish Zealots and then Christian; which particularly inspired the Conspirators of this Day, and which we have reason to Fear, was not buried in their Graves, but will be always urging to the like Attempts.

For which Good Purposes, I shall endeavour some account,

1. Of the Falseness of that Principle, upon which these Violences are generally built, namely, That they are Designs for God, and Hallowed by their being so.

2. Of those Mistakes which corrupt and misguide our Zeal to intemperate Degrees. And,

3. We may reflect on that wonderful Act of God's Providence, in so eminently protecting us, and the Gratitude we owe Him, who so does His *Marvelous Works*, that *they ought to be had in Remembrance.* And,

I. If we enquire what it was, which so far transported the Jews against the Holy Apostles, we shall find it none of the *weightier Matters of the Law, judgment or Mercy*, for these the Apostles observed better than themselves; but that which inflam'd their Zeal, was *Traditions of their own, the Commandments of Men*, and *not of God.* And of this our Saviour